



## What's Up at Sha'ar Zahav

### Tisha B'Av

WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 6:30 PM

Tisha B'Av—the ninth day of the month of Av—is the annual day of mourning across the Jewish world, commemorating episodes of destruction and renewal from ancient to modern times, and helping us to remember and explore Jewish approaches to catastrophe, renewal and hope. Join us for a special service, which will include ma'ariv, the beautiful Book of Lamentations, and a discussion of the themes of Tisha B'Av as they pertain to modern times and our diverse community.

### Jeffrey Lilly and Jonathan Comisar Perform Poetry and Music Together

SUNDAY, AUGUST 2, 4:00 PM

Jonathan Comisar will play the piano as Jeffrey Lilly reads his poetry here at Sha'ar Zahav. Jonathan composed the music and played the piano for Jeffrey's recording of his new collection – "The Butterfly Flies"

### Summer Open House

AUGUST 22

This is a great opportunity to invite your friends to discover Sha'ar Zahav and to meet new and potential members. Check weekly emails for more details!

(continued on page 4)

## We Counted Voices, And Here's What We Heard



By Susan Lubeck

**T**he period between Pesach and Shavuot, of counting the *omer*, found Sha'ar Zahavniks "counting voices"—joining together at house meetings, sharing stories and listening deeply to each other. The dual purpose was to build relationships/community, and inform the next round of our social justice work. Ninety-five people participated, including new and longtime members, and prospective members. As part of our Shavuot observance on May 28, we heard the themes that emerged from these conversations.

We first asked about sources of constriction (narrowness or "*mitzrayim*") that people felt. In response, the most frequently-occurring issue clusters were:

- Money and Financial Security—including current unemployment, long-term financial prospects, and cost of housing
- Priorities—City, State, National—including impacts of pending budget cuts, especially impacts on education and health care
- Caring for Others Facing Illness and Death—including illness and death of loved ones, lack of resources for those facing end of life and those caring for them, the need for support by the caregivers
- Aging and Lifecycle Concerns—including the invisibility some feel as they age, fear of isolation, desire for connection across generations and also connection with peers, and the desire to make a difference in our lives and focus on what matters most.

An additional cluster of issues voiced by many people related to worries about the younger generation. People voiced concerns about parenting and a lack of confidence that the world they will inherit will be safe and sustainable—in terms of the environment, the economy, and safety/security given the violence and inequality that is so widespread in our world.

Additional concerns voiced by participants included food

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# Counting Voices, Collecting Stories, Choosing to Act



**SO MUCH TO SAY;** so little space. I'll limit myself to just a few of the headlines! In May, the J centerfold story headlined: "Jews Take to the streets after Prop. 8 Ruling." The cover photo is what I like to think of as my version of Abraham

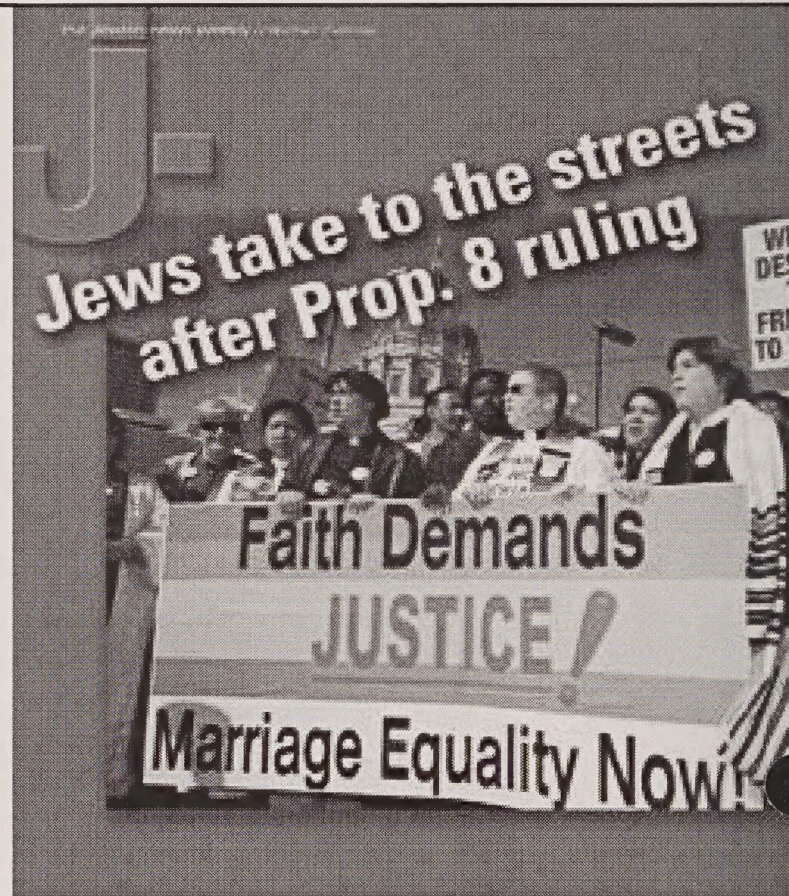
Joshua Heschel's classic civil rights photo, where he declared that he was 'praying with his feet.'"

Yes, I'm the one marching with my rainbow tallis joining Clergy from across faith backgrounds to carry the banner, "Faith Demands Justice! Marriage Equality Now!" And a few hours later, I was the one committing an act of non-violent resistance, putting my body on the line as a Jewish religious leader, to say: Justice has not yet been served!" That was my first act of civil disobedience, my first arrest, and my first time riding in the paddy wagon – with five lesbian ministers and another rabbi. A day for many she-hechyanus.

This last year, my social justice leadership portfolio has grown in leaps and bounds. To have been appointed to the Commission on Social Justice for the Reform Movement; to have become a financial stakeholder and steward in the leadership of our shul; to be courageous More Headlines anticipated

"LGBT QUEER SHUL USHERS IN NEW ERA WITH SIDDUR!" "GAY SHUL PROMOTES AUTHENTIC JEWISH PRAYER" "RABBI ANGEL, LUCKY LEADER AT CONGREGATION SHA'AR ZAVAV."

You will find many social justice readings in our new prayerbook, Siddur Sha'ar Zahav. As I write this column, I am irrepressibly excited about holding the book in my hands for the very first time. In my mind, I can see the radiant colors, almost feel the cloth, see the ribbon, taste the words... hear the Amens. We are so delighted to be reinvigorating our spiritual and intellectual experiences with prayer. If you are someone who gave up long ago on finding resonance, mean-



ing, affinity with the words in the prayerbook – I invite you to give it another chance. If you are someone who has always felt a kinship to our approach, I hope you'll experience an even greater enhancement. We are richly blessed with gifts so gorgeous, dripping with juicy talent for building beauty.

L'hitraot,  
Camille Shira

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Congregation Sha'ar Zahav is a member of the Union for Reform Judaism, the World Congress of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Jews, and the San Francisco Organizing Project



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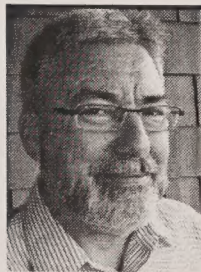
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# Counting Connections



**WHAT MAKES** a community? I've been thinking about that a lot recently. A common theme in our recent Counting Voices listening campaign was the importance of Sha'ar Zahav to many members as a community—a touchstone that provides support and comfort during these challenging times.

Community is a complex concept and is rarely monolithic. Many disparate groups can form community, and at Sha'ar Zahav connections between community members can happen at several levels. Sometimes the connection is with others "like us." And sometimes the connection is with those who are different and who by being different bring a great variety of experiences to the relationship.

**L'dor v'dor.** Martin and I had the pleasure of hosting one of the listening sessions. An interesting twist voiced by some participants was the importance of intergenerational experiences which our synagogue community provides. Although I've spoken frequently about the importance of children in our congregation, and my strong belief that these children are all our children, I hadn't really thought about the flip side of that demographic spread. Just as younger generations provide opportunities for an expanded experience for older members, so too do older members provide a valuable resource for younger members.

How can we maximize the potential of the generational spread which makes up our congregation? Some opportunities are explicit: Mentoring a bar/bat mitzvah student certainly benefits both parties. Participating in Beit Sefer Phyllis Mintzer's Galei Limudim program provides an opportunity for adults (parents and non-parents alike) to study together and then teach students—again benefiting both generations. Service leading also provides many opportunities for "newbies" to learn from the veterans—although this isn't necessarily generational.

What other opportunities could be created? At our Counting Voices session, one adult member wondered aloud: Why can't I have a "mentor" just like the b'nei mitzvah students? This is certainly a valid wish and one I would like to explore. But I wonder what over areas could be developed to foster

intergenerational connections?

**It takes a village.** One member reported involvement in the "San Francisco Village"—part of a nationwide movement of localized membership groups which, although aimed primarily at assisting with retirement, actually can involve multiple generations in providing each other with assistance in daily living. Coincidentally, a couple of days later, Martin and I were invited to a reception hosted by Marcy Adelman, the founder of Openhouse SF, which I had known primarily as the organization whose goal is to build a GLBT retirement residence in the former UC Extension complex at Market & Laguna. It turns out that Openhouse's goals are much broader and include the village concept. This brings to mind the chavurah concept at Sha'ar Zahav.

Rabbi Angel has often suggested development of zip-code based chavurot—principally to provide Bikkur Cholim support—but why should they be limited to one area? We have seen the success of the East Bay Chavurah in supplementing the worship services held at Mishkan Dolores. We have also seen the benefits of our Women's Chavurah and Mensch Group—and the post-services social group which meets once a month after Friday night services. A fledgling Young Professionals Chavurah has been in development in recent weeks. All these groups encourage connections between individual members.

We benefit from ongoing connections with others. Sometimes the desire is to connect with others "like us". And sometimes we benefit tremendously from connecting with those who bring different experiences to the relationship. Vibrant focused chavurot joined together in community can make for a stronger whole.

What other chavurot might enrich our community? And what programs which foster intergenerational connections might equally enrich our community? These are the questions on my mind—and I ask you to share in the realization of the answers. I welcome your thoughts on new ways for us to connect effectively—please share your ideas with me in person or to [president@shaarzahav.org](mailto:president@shaarzahav.org).

Together, let us create a richer, stronger Sha'ar Zahav community—with multiple gates of entry and avenues of connection.

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# What's Up at Sha'ar Zahav

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## Chavurot

### East Bay Chavurah

FRIDAY, JULY 10

AUGUST 14, 6:00 PM

The Sha'ar Zahav East Bay Chavurah meets the 2nd Friday of each month at 6pm for a vegetarian potluck meal in someone's home. At around 7:30 adults (and teens) are invited to continue our Shabbat experience with some text-based meaningful Jewish dialogue. July's EBC will be hosted by Susan Lubeck, Richard Weiner, and Raffi Lubeck-Weiner (see directory for the address). Questions, contact Jim Greenberg, .

### Post Oneg Social Group

FRIDAY, JULY 17, ~9:00 PM

FRIDAY, AUG 21, ~9:00 PM

After welcoming the Sabbath at Sha'ar Zahav's Friday night services, we invite

## Afternoon Wine & Cheese Salon with Amos Gil

Sunday, July 19, 2009, 4:00 pm  
Congregation Sha'ar Zahav

The New Israel Fund and Congregation Sha'ar Zahav present Israeli human rights expert, Amos Gil at a wine and cheese reception. Amos Gil is the founding director of Ir Amim, an Israeli non-partisan organization focused on Jerusalem in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Please RSVP to [jason@nif.org](mailto:jason@nif.org).

you to join us as we visit a local restaurant after the Oneg. All Ages, All Sexual Orientations, All Genders, All Ethnicities, All Relationship Statuses Welcome! For more information contact Jim Acerra at [jacerra@msn.com](mailto:jacerra@msn.com). or Tony Enriquez at [arnold\\_enriquez@hotmail.com](mailto:arnold_enriquez@hotmail.com).

## Committees

### CSZ-SFOP Organizing Committee Meeting

THURSDAY, JULY 9, 7:00 - 8:30 PM

THURSDAY, AUG 6, 7:00 - 8:30 PM

Join with other Sha'ar Zahavniks in building relationships and in pursuing justice. We have just completed a cycle of house meetings in which we have listened to one another's deeply felt concerns. We will now reflect on what we've heard, and strategize about what actions we will take next. For more information, please contact Dana Vinicoff, [vinicoff@hotmail.com](mailto:vinicoff@hotmail.com), or attend an Organizing Committee meeting.

### Welcoming Committee Meeting

THURSDAY, JULY 9, 7:00 - 9:00 PM

THURSDAY, AUG 13, 7:00 - 9:00 PM

All are invited to join this vibrant, revitalized group as we work to make Sha'ar Zahav the most welcoming environment, to both new and longstanding members. Have an idea that you want to contribute? Simply want to build community amongst fantastic people? Come! Please contact Jim Acerra, [jacerra@msn.com](mailto:jacerra@msn.com), or Marty Rawlings-Fein, [marty@ftmsf.org](mailto:marty@ftmsf.org) for more details.

### CSZ Ritual Committee Meeting

THURSDAY JULY 30, 6:30 - 8:00 PM

AUGUST 27, 6:30 - 8:00 PM

We invite all CSZ members to attend meetings of the Ritual Committee. If you have great ideas about CSZ's services for Shabbat, holidays, or lifecycles, or want to get involved, we want you to join us! You don't have to be a service leader, or have any particular Jewish background. We're looking for creative thinkers and energy to make our ritual life better and better. Our meeting begins with a Ma'ariv service.

### Communications Committee

WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 7:00-8:00 PM

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12 7:00-8:00 PM

We are restarting the communications committee—our mission is to get out the word about Sha'ar Zahav's fabulousness to our own members and to the local community. We are looking for people who like to write and edit, make phone calls, update web pages/social networking sites, and more. For more info, contact Jo Ellen at [jgkaiser@earthlink.net](mailto:jgkaiser@earthlink.net)

### Sha'ar Zahav High Holiday Chorus

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 19: FIRST MEETING

Come one, come all, and sing with the Sha'ar Zahav High Holy Day Chorus! We will be singing on Erev Rosh Hashanah, September 18, and Erev Yom Kippur, September 27. Rehearsals will be Wednesday evenings, 7-9pm, starting mid-August. To "sing" on, and for more information, please contact Cantor Sharon Bernstein at .

### Va'ad Meeting

THURSDAY, AUG 20, 6:45 PM

All are welcome to attend and listen to CSZ's monthly board meeting with its pre-set agenda.

## Classes

### Introduction to Judaism – 2nd and 3rd Trimesters

2ND TRIMESTER BEGINS TUESDAY, AUGUST 10, 7:00 PM

TAUGHT BY RABBINICAL INTERN

REUBEN ZELLMAN

Whether you are brand new to Judaism, a veteran who wants to fill in your knowledge, or a person exploring conversion, we welcome you to explore Judaism in our diverse, inclusive community that celebrates all sexual and gender identities. We will cover holidays, sacred texts, ethics, history, customs, beliefs, the lifecycle, social justice and more, in an environment that encourages your questions and perspectives. Field trips, Shabbat dinner and other experiences will be part of the course. All are encouraged to join us regardless of ability to pay. Inquire within the office for pro-rated costs. For questions, to register, or to confidentially discuss payment, contact Reuben, [reuben@shaarzahav.org](mailto:reuben@shaarzahav.org), 415-861-6932 x306; or Shaun, [shaun@shaarzahav.org](mailto:shaun@shaarzahav.org), 415-861-6932 x304.



## Meet Sha'ar Zahav's Staff!

We would like our new members to meet, and our long time members to better know, our wonderful office and facilities staff here at CSZ.

Benjamin Hansen and Samuel Bradley are our facilities staff. They have both been with us a couple years and work on the evenings and weekends.

### **Ben Hansen**

Ben is a student at San Francisco State University majoring in communications. He has lived in San Francisco for two years. Before moving here he lived in Israel for a year, after studying acting in San Diego for a couple years. He enjoys theatre and the arts.

### **Samuel Bradley**

Samuel is a native San Franciscan. He attended Galileo High School where he played football. Sam's day job is at Nor-Cal Vocational, working with mentally disabled adults. He has been there eleven years as an instructor/janitor. He enjoys sports, especially football and basketball.

We have been fortunate to have Shaun Hannan and Greg Lawrence in the front office for two to three years. Shaun is our Administrative Assistant and Greg is Rabbi's Assistant and Membership Liaison.

### **Shaun Hannan**

Shaun is from upstate New York and has been in San Francisco for eight years. He has worked at CSZ off and on since 2003. Shaun holds a BA in Anthropology from Courtland State in New York, and a Masters, also in Anthropology, from CIIS in San Francisco. He is a long time runner, and is interested in public health and social justice issues.

### **Greg Lawrence**

Greg is from northern New Jersey and has been in San Francisco since the fall of 2006 when he came to work at CSZ. He holds two BAs from Brandeis University in Psychology and Neuroscience. He is now working on his Masters in Transpersonal Counseling Psychology at John F. Kennedy University in Pleasant Hill.

We think of the synagogue as a place of worship, but a lot of business is transacted here too. Someone has to manage payments, invoices, personnel and more—and that person is our administrator, Regina Wurst.

### **Regina Wurst**

Regina has been our administrator for two and a half years, having moved from San Diego to take the position here. She grew up in Oakland and graduated in engineering from UC Berkeley. Regina has worked in the Jewish community for thirteen years as a religious school teacher, synagogue program director, rabbinic aid, social worker with Jewish Family Service, and synagogue administrator. She raised her four children in the Fresno area and is now working on the next generation, grandchild, Elijah. Her interests include education, social justice issues and interfaith work. In Fresno she was one of the founders and director of the Interfaith Alliance of Central California, and was active in the Jewish-Muslim Dialogue.

# Spring Cleaning



**I HOPE** that your Summer is off to a fabulous start. We have wrapped up another wonderful year here at BSPM and are looking

forward to another year of wonderful learning and building community together. Summer always gives me the opportunity to plan, create and organize new exciting programs and committees for the following year. There are so many new and interesting ways for you to get involved next year and I hope that you will consider participating in one or many of these programs"

**Galei Limudim**- The Galei Limudim is going into our sixth year. We are looking for adults who want to embark on a learning course together, meet six or seven times and go into a BSPM classroom. This program is for parents and non parents, old, young, tall, short... you get the picture. A wonderful aspect of our community is the opportunity to

bring together different groups at the synagogue and provide opportunities for learning and group bonding. This group does both. The students talk about the programs every year as being a highlight, so please consider joining.

## **Community Retreat Committee**

Each year we go to Walker Creek Ranch and spend a wonderful weekend together shmoozing, praying eating yummy food and special activities. The retreat, however becomes so much better with your involvement and creativity. The committee will meet four times throughout the year (mostly on Saturdays during class) to help plan the best retreat we have had yet!

**Shabbat Simcha** Shabbat Simcha is our fun, interactive, community wide Saturday morning service designed to be a learner's minyan. The dates for this program are 11/7, 12/5, 1/9, 2/6, 3/6 and 5/1. The program will start at 10:15 and there will be learning tracks at 11:15 for the whole community with wonder-

ful guest teachers. Each Shabbat Simcha will be followed by a Shbbat lunch and singing. The success of this program depends on your participation!! If you would be interested in being a service leader or help with the lunches or workshops, please let me know!

**Teacher Mentors** We are always looking for additional ways to support our wonderful teachers and we know that there is a lot of expertise in our community. If you would be interested in helping support our teachers through coaching, assisting in the classroom or by providing a particular training, please get in touch with me.

Another part of next year that I am very excited about is our teacher training program. Some of the trainings we are providing for the teachers this year include:

Everything you wanted to know about BSPM but were afraid to ask.

The ins and outs of project-based learning.

Different teaching modalities in the Jewish classroom.

The Ganz megillah (the whole story), weaving Jewish texts into your lesson plans.

Effective strategies for classroom management.

I am so excited about what the new year will bring, but for now I hope you are all enjoying your summer and I look forward to a wonderful start of school.

B'Shalom,  
Rebecca



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**Please contact me at 415.845.6800**

**[andrea.d.guerra@gmail.com](mailto:andrea.d.guerra@gmail.com)**

## Life Cycles

Mazel Tov to **Joe Weinberg** on his becoming a Bar Mitzvah on Saturday, April 4.

Mazel Tov to **Gedalia Braverman** and his entire extended family on the Hebrew naming of his twins, **Ari** and **Ella** on Friday, April 17.

Mazel Tov to **Joshua Muller** on becoming a Bar Mitzvah on Saturday, April 25.

Mazel tov to **Emma Pines-Schwartz**, who was called to the bima on the occasion of her Bat Mitzvah on Saturday, May 23.

Mazel tov to **Rob Daroff** and **Brian Nagai** who were married on Sunday, May 24.

## Naches

Yashir Koach to CSZ Alum **Jeff Friedman**, who was promoted to Associate Professor of Dance with tenure at Rutgers University. In addition, he received a Senior Fulbright Fellowship in Frankfurt, Germany.

Yashir Koach to **Jonathan Igor Williamson**, who, after working

intensely for two years under the tutelage of **Tony Harris**, has received his Ner Tamid Boy Scout honor! Tony presented Jonathan with this prestigious award at a Court of Honor on May 27 at the Forest Hills Homeowners Association clubhouse.

Yashir Koach to **Avi Goldberg**, who, in April, began his new position as a Sr. Business Systems Analyst with Apple Inc. in their Online Store Division.

Yashir Koach to **Tsipora Prochovnick**, who graduated from Midrasha this year in a ceremony on Sunday, May 17, 10:45 am at Congregation Beth El in Berkeley.

Yishar Koach to **Jim Acerra**, who was recently accepted into and began attending the Keller Graduate School of DeVry University for a Masters in Business Administration with a specialization in marketing

Shona Zimmerman-Burnett, daughter of **Mike Zimmerman**, received her J.D. from the University of New Mexico Law School on May 16th. Shona published two articles,

was a member of law review and received the Irwin Stern Moise Award in Legal and Judicial Ethics.

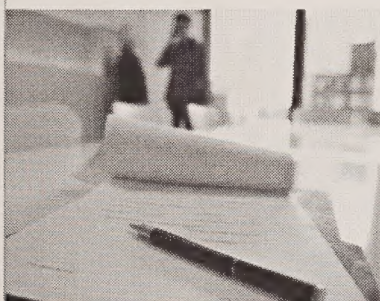
Yashir Koach to **Dan Bellm**, who has won a 2009 California Book Award (the Silver Medal in Poetry) from the Commonwealth Club of California for his most recent book, *Practice: A book of midrash*, with an award ceremony at the club on June 4. Also, **Dan Bellm's** "Ge'ulah" poem from the CSZ siddur ("God did not lead us by the nearer way...") has been included in the Best Gay Poetry 2008 anthology from Midsummer Night's Press.

## New Members

We warmly welcome **Ruth Armstrong, Tim Detmers, Leah Nadel, Tazz Richards & Alyscia Perez-Reyes** and **Sarah Lowenstein** as the newest members of our congregation.

And we welcome the return of **Ruby Cymrot-Wu**, who, after growing up within the CSZ community, has chosen to return as an adult. Welcome Home Ruby!

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**12 TAMUZ**  
9:00 am Torah Study  
0:15 am Shabbat Service

**19 TAMUZ**  
9:00 am Torah Study

**26 TAMUZ**  
9:00 am Torah Study  
0:15 am Shabbat Service

**4 AV**  
9:00 am Torah Study  
0:15 am Shabbat Service

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
12 AV 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service	13 AV 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service	14 AV 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service	15 AV 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service	16 AV 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7:00 pm SFOP meeting	17 AV 8:15 pm Shabbat Service	11 AV 9:00 am Torah Study 10:15 am Shabbat Service
19 AV 6:30 pm Ma'ariv service	20 AV 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7:00 pm Intro to Judaism class	21 AV 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service	22 AV 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7:00 pm Chorus Rehearsal	23 AV 6:30 pm Ma'ariv Service 7:00 pm Welcoming Com Mt	24 AV 7:30 pm Shabbat Service New Siddur Celebration	25 AV 9:00 am Torah Study 10:15 am Shabbat Service
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## **Bikkur Cholim Fund**

**Andrew & Michelle Williamson**

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Brenda Davis and David Weinstein.

## **Chai-Building**

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grandmother, Perel Berenstein.

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**Steve Elman** in honor of Ellie Cohen.

**Steve Elman** in memory of Howard  
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**Jonathan Funk & John Arnold** in honor  
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**Robert & Claire Gilson** a congratulations  
and best wishes to Dr. Robert Daroff &  
Dr. Brian Nagai.

**Alex Ingersoll & Martin Tannenbaum** in  
memory of Kit Bernholz.

in memory of Tom Lakritz's aunts, Mary  
Fried and Doris Federhar.

in memory of Harold Schwartz.

in honor of Tsipora Prochovnick's  
athletic achievements.

in memory of Howard Rinkoff.

in memory of Seth Charney.

in celebration of Joe Weinberg's bar  
mitzvah.

in celebration of Joshua Muller's bar  
mitzvah.

in celebration of James Carlson's new  
job.

in celebration of Avi Goldberg's new  
job.

in appreciation of Vanessa Eisemann's  
coordination of our fabulous weekend  
with Chai Feldblum.

**Rose Katz**

in memory of Marvin J. Katz.

in memory of Vogel, friend of Shoshana  
Levenberg.

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Rinkoff.

in memory of Sophie Lezell.

**Laura Lowe** in honor of Joshua Muller's

Bar Mitzvah.

**Richard Meyerson** in memory of Stanley  
Meyerson.

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**Ami Zusman** in memory of Bernard  
Frazin.

in honor of Rabbi Camille Angel.

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**Martin & Shelli Rawlings-Fein**

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the Va'ad for continued leadership to  
CSZ.

in honor of Merle Malakoff for service  
as CSZ Treasurer.

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commitment of so many at CSZ to  
progressive, pro-active Judaism.

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## April

3/4

Bimah Flowers Generously Sponsored by **Gina Centanni** *In honor of her son Joe's Bar Mitzvah.*

Friday Oneg Generously Sponsored by **Laura Lowe, Manny Fishman and Leslie Kane**

Saturday Kiddush Generously Sponsored by **Gina Centanni and Allen Weinberg** *In honor of their son Joe's Bar Mitzvah.*

17/18

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Friday Oneg Generously Sponsored by **G'dali Braverman** *In honor of Sally Naumann, grandmother of David Robinson and mother of Hope Robinson.*

24/25

Bimah Flowers Generously Sponsored by **Deborah Udin** *In memory of her mother, Marian Stoler.*

Friday Oneg Generously Sponsored by **Jacqui Shine** *In honor of Joshua Muller's Bar Mitzvah.*

Saturday Kiddush Generously Sponsored by **Nancy Muller & Donna Blow** *In honor of Joshua's Bar Mitzvah.*

Friday Oneg Generously Sponsored by **Ilana Strubel** *In memory of her father, Dan Strubel.*

## May

1/2

Friday Night Live Dinner Generously Sponsored by **Allison Wellsfry**

Bimah Flowers Generously Sponsored by **Jeffrey Lilly** *In memory of his father, Clyde Lilly.*

8/9

Bimah Flowers Generously Sponsored by **Ken Repp & Mike Bromberg** *In loving memory of Ken's mother, Eva Gaine.*

15/16

Bimah Flowers & Friday Oneg Generously Sponsored by **Ann Bauman & Kelly Thiemann** *In honor of their 18th wedding anniversary.*

22/23

Bimah Flowers Generously Sponsored by **Robert Daroff & Brian Nagai** *In honor of their aufruf.*

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Saturday Kiddush Generously Sponsored by **Steve Elman & Tom Holt** *In honor of Emma Pines-Schwartz's becoming a Bat Mitzvah.*

29/30

Bimah Flowers & Saturday Kiddush Generously Sponsored by **Ruth Bernstein & Matthew Patchell** *In honor of Zach on the occasion of his becoming a Bar Mitzvah.*

## We Counted Voices

(continued from page 1)

safety and affordability, marriage equality, the environment/toxicity and warming, and Israel/Middle East.

We also asked about sources of hope and liberation. The most frequent responses included:

- gratitude for abundance in our lives, our partners, and life's simple pleasures
- spirituality and spiritual practice
- progress made toward LGBTQ rights
- and our children

And many people expressed intense appreciation for our Sha'ar Zahav community.

A Sampling of Quotes:

*"I have lost my job and actually don't know how I'll pay my bills."*

*"I can't help comparing my child to other youth, who seem so accomplished—will my kid make it in a world that is so competitive?"*

*"Our young child is scared, really scared, about what is happening to the planet."*

*"Sha'ar Zahav is a huge source of hope and connection in my life. I'm so grateful*

*for this community."*

*"I don't have children; who will care for me when I need care?"*

*"I didn't know what 'ecommunity' meant before getting involved with Sha'ar Zahav."*

*"This kind of dialogue is very important. I'd like to do this more often, maybe as part of a chavurah."*

*There are people I've known for years—except I realized I didn't really know them until I heard them speak at the house meeting."*

We thank all the participants who listened and shared their stories. We specially recognize the many people who made this listening campaign possible: hosts, notetakers, outreachers, and facilitators: Aaron Buchbinder, Alex Ingersoll, Alexis Lezin, Amy Scharf, Amy Schustack, Beth Sousa, Dana Vinicoff, Davey Shlasko, Jim Frazin, Jonathan Crosby, Karen Segal, Kendra Froshman, Laurie Schmidt, Lonnie Weiss, Martin Tannenbaum, Michael Tyler, Ora Prochovnick, Rabbi Angel, Rena Frantz, Sara Haber, Sarita Groisser, Scott Kramer, Shayna Prochovnick, Shoshana Levenberg, and Susan Belau.

"Counting Voices" is part of the cycle

of organizing, which consists of (1) Listening, (2) Research (3) Action, and (4) Reflection, leading back to more listening. This ongoing process of listening, building relationships, and taking action is led by our own Organizing Committee, which meets July 9, and then the first Thursday of each month, at 7 pm, at Sha'ar Zahav.

In the past, our organizing work has led to our involvement in health care—including our playing a major role in getting Healthy San Francisco passed, and keeping officials focused on implementing it. Organizing has also strengthened our work against Prop 8, both in our own community and reaching out to Christian congregations in SFOP. Our last listening campaign also led to us re-starting the thriving East Bay Chavurah.

You can contribute to helping us move toward action while building community. Check out an Organizing Committee meeting (the first Thursday evening), or contact Dana Vinicoff at , or meet our SFOP organizer Andrea Marta ([andrea@sfop.org](mailto:andrea@sfop.org)). There are many options—including bite-sized possibilities—for making a difference.

# Breathing into the Unexpectedness of Life

I WAS STUCK on MUNI the other day. The conductor announced that she was having difficulty with the train and was going out of service at the next stop. I looked up from the magazine I was reading and noticed virtually everyone under the age of 40 or so had earbuds dangling from their ears, or were engrossed in some handheld electronic device. I thought, "what is this world coming to; everyone isolated in their own little worlds?" But then I realized, how is separating ourselves from others via electronics any different from my reading? Don't PDAs, Blackberries and iPhones allow us to keep more on top of our schedules so that we can fit more in, or at least not miss what we'd already agreed to do?

Yes, and No.

New technologies are designed to assist us. But is hyper-speed the ultimate goal? What about taking time to stop and smell the roses? Does technology get in the way of paying attention to our surroundings so that we miss the wide range of wonderful differences around us? I'd like to suggest that it's not healthy to always be worried about time; rushing, rushing, rushing to meet deadlines. I have been learning the importance of exhaling and taking in a long, deep breath, to deal with the unexpected. When the inevitable happens, e.g., when a MUNI car breaks down, or the person ahead of me at the cashier fumbles with their wallet, I try to remember to breathe into the experience.

As CSZers, aren't we the unexpected? For over thirty years we have woven a beautiful tapestry of individuals from a wide array of backgrounds and cultures, ages, sexualities, and socio-economic circumstances. I like to think of us as role models for living unexpected lives. Perhaps we've grappled with millennia-old laws around kashrut (kosher) and made them cur-

rent by following eco-kosher practices. Perhaps we're sometimes Shomer Shabbos (Shabbat observant). We don't always agree about the centrality of Israel in our lives. In our synagogue home we recognize that many of us have different takes on G~d. We learn trope, or think Torah is anachronistic, or don't know from trope and don't think twice about Torah. We're wonderfully human; and color virtually every hue of the rainbow of humanity.

It is in the unexpected that we learn about ourselves, through others. I feel blessed with the diversity and variety at CSZ. I was worried that as a gay man, who am I to write about transgender folk or bisexuals? I don't want to insult anyone by speaking of them as an "other," or objectify others by talking *about* them, and not *to* them (as our sage Greg Lawrence taught me). I'm hoping that if I'm empathetic and sensitive, it will be okay to write about experiences which aren't mine.

So, just as flowers, or a sunset, or the smile of a baby can give us reason to pause, I wonder if transgender folk were created to compel the rest of us to pause. Transgender people are a blessing. The blurring of assigned and taken gender makes binary gender normalized people uncomfortable; forcing us to face unexpectedness. And if we're willing to breathe into the unexpected we can start tapping into the infinite mystery of what truly is.

After a moment's breath we can realize that there is more than a binary gender formula. Hopefully, after another breath we learn to accept that there is some feminine in all of us, some masculine in all of us, and some mix of it all in all of us.

Perhaps the unexpectedness of queer people helps loosen up thinking around sexuality as well as gender roles. For example, hopefully one day bisexuals won't have difficulty being seen and acknowledged. And then the

next day, everyone will celebrate that love is love, no matter in which human form it is packaged.

As fellow congregant and poet Dan Bellm wrote, "G~d did not lead us by the nearer way...but round-about, by way of the wilderness..." I believe that each of us, "lesbian, gay or sanctified in ways of our own" has been put on this earth, for however few years we have, to be our true selves. And in interacting with others, some like us, and some different, hopefully we grow, and guide each other on whatever path we are on.

So, if we isolate ourselves too much, those beautiful interactions won't happen as frequently, and it will take longer for the world to be the better place it can be. Unexpected moments can connect us with others, and with the transcendent (G~d, if you use that language). As we keep one eye or ear on what's going on around us, we can remain open to the unexpected while enjoying our music, iPhone apps, or magazines. Until then, I'm learning the importance of exhaling, and then taking in a long, deep breath to welcome the unexpected. During the coming Days of Awe (the period between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur) may we all breathe into the unexpected.

## Advertise in the JGF!

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Contact Jo Ellen (jgkaiser@earthlink.net)

# The Virtue of Lamentation

By Nina Wouk for the Ritual Committee

**L**amentation, Richard Rohr wrote, is a particularly Jewish form of liturgy, absent in Christianity. Eichah, or Lamentations, which we read on Tisha b'Av is included in the Christian Bible, but for us it is a living text, read annually both evening and morning, often seated on the floor of a darkened synagogue. To rise from the reading of Eichah, from floor to bench, can feel like rising from darkness to light, from death to life. Lamentation is in fact a survival strategy. The Torah tells to choose life. Faced with any catastrophe, it is better to cry out and survive than to choke on pain or despair and die.

In ancestral legend, lamentation secured our inheritance as a nation. During her difficult pregnancy, Rivka confronted God: 'If so, why am I?' She did not bury her pain, or try to end it by ending the pregnancy, but demanded and received an answer: the inner conviction

that her younger son would inherit the birthright of the firstborn. This conviction gave meaning to her suffering and direction to her life. Whether the conviction came from God or from the depth of her own being, she reached it by crying out, refusing silence.

Lamentation is not the same as simply acknowledging pain. Jacob's sons did not try to bury the pain of being loved less than their brother Joseph, but neither did they lament. They sought relief rather than meaning, and contrived to get rid of Joseph, a crime that would haunt them throughout their lives, even when it unexpectedly turned out for good and long after Joseph had forgiven them.

Liberation begins with lamentation. When the Israelites were slaves in Egypt 'they groaned from the work, and they cried out, and their cry rose to God.' Even though the cry was not directed to God, God heard and sent Moshe to lead them

out of slavery. Based on this, both the Torah and Jewish folklore repeatedly assert that God hears the cry of the oppressed.

So deep is the belief that a cry from the heart always reaches heaven, that we read about it every Yom Kippur afternoon. Jonah, after reluctantly saving the lives of his national enemies, complains to God that he is angry enough to die. God speaks directly to him, declaring that divine love embraces cattle as much as recalcitrant prophets. However angry he is, Jonah does not die.

Lamentation means confronting God. Job, who has lost his children, his fortune, and his health for no apparent reason, refuses to either die or cease crying out. God responds, although in a terrifying way that Job cannot understand. As the much-repeated Psalm 145 insists, God is close to anyone who truly calls out.

Eichah brings us inside the experience of lamentation. Because it treats God as directly responsible for the disasters of history, it repeatedly encourages the devastated Zion to cry out day and night, and demands that God see the destruction, relent and restore the land, people and Temple. The author rebukes God for being enveloped in anger, a cloud that shuts out prayer, and promises to weep unceasingly until God looks down and takes notice. It ends with the prayer and promise, 'Return us, God and we shall, return; renew our days as at the beginning,' for 'You have already raged enough against us'.

Even in the most catastrophic of circumstances, Jews have always turned towards God in grief and anger. We have turned away from despair and chosen life by articulating our pain, by insisting on justice even when it seems most absent, by seeking meaning in the incomprehensible. Every lamentation is a transcendence, an encounter with the Infinite. Reading Eichah, we confront the bitterness of history, and rediscover transcendence even amid that bitterness.



## Condolences

We extend heartfelt condolences to the following CSZ members on the death of their loved ones:

**Allan Gold** and **Alan Ferrara**, on the death of their aunt, Rita Ferrara, and their uncle, Charles Curreri

**Barbara Rinkoff**, **Ellen Murland**, and **Sophie Rinkoff-Murland**, on the death of Barbara's father, Howard Rinkoff

**Lydia Zinn**, on the death of her paternal uncle Cica Berisa

**Bob Katz**, on the death of his cousin, Shirley Bernheim

**Lydia Zinn**, on the death of her aunt, Dinah Mendel

**Patricia Lin**, on the death of her grandmother, Wei-Ching Pan Lin

**Ann Daniels**, **Jonathan Zingman**, and **Naomi and Shira Zingman-Daniels**, on the death of Ann's aunt, Marjorie Gordon, and on the death of their close relative and friend, Helen Grossman

**Howard Steiermann**, on the death of his great uncle, Sidney Selman

**Jim Frazin**, on the death of his father, Bernard Robert Frazin

**Judy Huerta**, on the death of her uncle, Richard M. Jones

**Ron Selman**, on the death of his uncle, Selig Seidler

## Member Yahrzeits

### July

- 4 Edwin Gabay
- 5 Matthew Rostoker
- 6 David Roy Custead
- 9 Alexander Louis Konski
- 17 Steven P. Berman
- 25 Seth Miller
- 30 Phillip Resnick

### August

- 2 David H. Kotch
- Jordan Berger
- 4 Mavis Eldredge
- 5 Ernie Weinstein
- 6 Jay Platt
- 7 Mark Landsberger
- 16 Peter Rosenfeld
- 18 Elliot Schneck
- 28 Jay Feinstein

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## Please Be in Touch With Me

I am eager to be in touch with all members of the CSZ family whenever there are occasions of joy or sadness in your lives.

Where there is a death in the family, please call me as soon as possible. We very much want to be there with you at a time of grief.

*Rabbi Camille  
Shira Angel*

*Earnings Devoted to Philanthropy*

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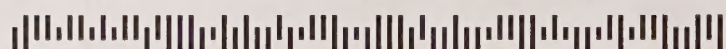
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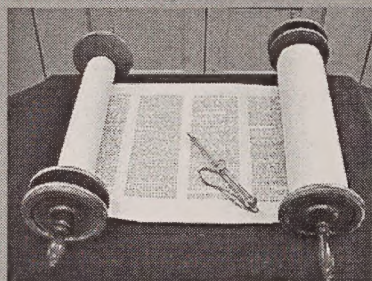
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